

I am writing regarding the National Association of Broadcasters' petition, No. 04-160.

My wife and I became subscribers to the XM satellite radio service more than a year and a half ago. We installed an XM receiver in one of our vehicles because we travel around the country a lot and quite frankly, got tired of the dial turning and options available on gutted FM broadcast outlets around the nation. Many radio stations, especially on Sundays, all sound the same from one market to the next, and because of satellite feeds, offer little local content.

We have been very pleased with having XM in our vehicle and enjoy not only the many music offerings, but also enjoy listening to our favorite cable TV news channel's audio, and have enjoyed listening to sporting events and comedy programming.

We enjoy XM so much that we installed a receiver in our home, too, and find that we no longer listen to local AM or FM broadcasters because of the vast variety of XM programming.

The newly added traffic and weather programming on XM is great for people like us who like to travel. We now can monitor the weather and traffic conditions in a city hours in advance of when we will pass through an area, and can adjust our routes or plans accordingly. Similar information carried on terrestrial AM and FM broadcast stations does not have the reach that satellite radio does, and we can be much better prepared before entering a metro area.

Likewise, we look forward to the time when additional cities are carried on XM for traffic and weather. While we live in Rochester in southeastern Minnesota, we travel to the Twin Cities metro area (Minneapolis-St. Paul) frequently for work and business purposes. Right now, traffic information for the Twin Cities is carried on an AM station that cannot be heard much outside the very immediate Twin Cities suburbs. We literally have to be in the Twin Cities suburbs to pick up this station on AM. However, with Twin Cities traffic information on XM, we could monitor conditions well before we embarked on the hour-and-a-half drive north and adjust our routes accordingly before we got into a bottleneck.

I feel strongly that the traffic and weather information offers a valued service to travelers. I hate to say it, but there is some entertainment value in it, too, for persons who are away from areas they may have lived in formerly. For instance, I grew up and lived in the Philadelphia area until 15 years ago. However, I occasionally find myself tuning in the Philadelphia traffic channel in the morning on my 8-minute commute to work to hear where the bottlenecks are in my old haunts. You might be surprised, but because of how people move around the country, they still like to hear familiar things on their radio, such as my enjoyment in hearing how traffic is running smoothly on the Schuylkill Expressway in Philadelphia or how there is a traffic backup on the Pennsylvania Turnpike in my hometown of Willow Grove. Strange, but, true.

The traffic and weather information that XM has added to its broadcast programming provides a valuable service to motorists and I surely hope that the commissioners see that it does fill that need. Likewise, I have no need for an AM/FM radio in my car anymore, and I would hope that the day comes when XM is competitive enough that XM is the only radio I need in my new car when I purchase it. And if traffic and weather is broadcast on my XM radio and I don't have AM/FM, I will be just fine.

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